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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 ICA-15 DCDE-00
H-01 NEA-07 NSC-05 NSAE-00 SY-05 HA-06 PM-09
PA-02 DCT-02 SMS-01 SAL-01 ACDA-12 SP-02 SPRS-02
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R 081611Z MAY 81
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5965
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08624
E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, SOPN, LY, UK, US

SUBJ: UK REACTION TO CLOSURE OF LIBYAN PEOPLES

1. MAY 8 LONDON TIMES CONTAINS EDITORIAL SUPPORTING U.S.
DECISION TO EXPEL LIBYAN DIPLOMATS FROM WASHINGTON,
WHILE WARNING THAT QADHAFI COULD MOVE CLOSER TO THE
SOVIET UNION TO ENL LIBYAN ISOLATION. EDITORIAL URGES
LIBYANS TO BUILD A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST
INSTEAD, BUT ACKNOWLEDGES THIS CANNOT BE DONE UNLESS
QADHAFI STOPS MURDERING HIS OPPONENTS ABROAD, AND
CONCLUDES THAT "HE IS PROBABLY INCAPABLE OF SUCH
SENSIBLE BEHAVIOR." EDITORIAL IS ENTITLED "THE MURDEROUS
COLONEL QADHAFI". FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT.

2 QUOTE: THE AMERICAN DECISION TO EXPEL LIBYAN DIPLOMATS
FROM WASHINGTON IS A MARK OF THE ANGER FELT IN WESTERN
CAPITALS OVER THE ANTICS OF THE LIBYAN LEADER COLONEL
QADHAFI. HE SUPPORTS AND FINANCES INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM
WHICH IS OBNOXIOUS ENOUGH, BUT HE ALSO QUITE OPENLY
SEEKS OUT AND KILLS OPPONENTS OF HIS RULE WHO HAVE TAKEN

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REFUGE IN AMERICA OR EUROPE. OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO,
LIBYAN EMIGRES HAVE BEEN MURDERED IN ROME AND IN LONDON,
AND ANOTHER WAS SHOT AT IN THE UNITED STATES. ONLY
TWO MONTHS AGO, COLONEL QADHAFI REPEATED HIS THREAT TO
KILL LIBYANS ON FOREIGN SOIL, DECLARING THAT "THE MASSES
-BY WHICH HE MEANT HIMSELF - HAD THE RIGHT TO "LIQUIDATE
THEIR ENEMIES BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD".
IT IS POSSIBLE, INDEED PROBABLE, THAT THE LIBYAN LEADER
REGARDS AN ABILITY TO REACH OUT FROM TRIPOLI AND STRIKE
AT HIS ENEMIES WHEREVER THEY MAY BE AS A SIGN OF STRENGTH,
INSTILLING FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY
HAD ESCAPED THE LONG ARM OF COLONEL QADHAFI'S VENGEANCE.
IN FACT, THE IMPRESSION GIVEN IS OF A LEADER WHO IS SO UNSURE

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OF HIMSELF, AND SO CONSCIOUS OF THE LACK OF POPULARITY ENJOYED BY HIS DICTATORSHIP, THAT HE IS UNABLE TO TOLERATE OPPOSITION OF ANY KIND, EVEN WHEN IT IS BEYOND LIBYA'S BORDERS. THE DEGREE OF DISAFFECTION IN LIBYA IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS OF INTERNAL UNREST. LAST SUMMER THERE WAS AN ATTEMPTED UPRISING IN TOBRUK, IN WHICH SENIOR ARMY AND INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. THERE IS A FEELING - NEVER PUBLICLY EXPRESSED, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS - THAT AS A RESULT OF COLONEL QADHAFI'S IRRESPONSIBLE AND ADVENTURIST ACTIONS, LIBYA HAS BECOME POLITICALLY ISOLATED, AND RECENT LIBYAN ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AFRICA OF WHICH THE INVASION OF CHAD IS BUT ONE EXAMPLE - HAVE HARDLY IMPROVED MATTERS.

ONE WAY OUT OF THIS ISOLATION LIES THROUGH CLOSER TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. MOSCOW HAS RELATIVELY FEW FRIENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND MAY WELL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WORSENING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE QADHAFI REGIME AND THE

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WEST TO DRAW LIBYA FURTHER INTO THE SOVIET FOLD. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THE RUSSIANS EVIDENTLY DO NOT REGARD COLONEL QADHAFI AS A PARTICULARLY RELIABLE ALLY, AND ARE EMBARRASSED BY SOME OF HIS MORE ECCENTRIC OR EVEN DANGEROUS OPERATIONS. THEY ARE ALSO SUSPICIOUS OF THE LIBYAN LEADER'S BRAND OF "ISLAMIC SOCIALISM", WHICH IS RATHER TOO UNORTHODOX FOR SOVIET TASTES, AND COLONEL QADHAFI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW LAST MONTH, WHILE OUTWARDLY SUCCESSFUL, WAS MARKED BY WHAT THE SOVIET SIDE REFERRED TO AS "IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES" ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT LIBYA WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS, AND ESPECIALLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN APRIL, COLONEL QADHAFI SAID IN AN INTERVIEW THAT HE HOPED THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WOULD PURSUE A MIDDLE EAST POLICY MORE FAVOURABLE TO THE ARABS THAN PRESIDENT CARTER'S HAD BEEN, AND DECLARED THAT HE WAS READY FOR A DIALOGUE WITH WASHINGTON "AT ANY TIME". THERE ARE ALREADY STRONG ECONOMIC LINKS BETWEEN LIBYA AND AMERICA: APPROXIMATELY FORTY PER CENT OF THE OIL PRODUCED BY LIBYA GOES TO THE UNITED STATES, WHICH IS NEARLY TWELVE PER CENT OF AMERICA'S TOTAL OIL IMPORTS.

IT MIGHT BE TEMPTING FOR COLONEL QADHAFI TO REACT TO THE LATEST AMERICAN MOVES BY RAISING THE PRICE OF HIS OIL, OR BY REDUCING THE FLOW. HE CANNOT, AFTER ALL, RETALIATE IN KIND, AS THERE HAVE BEEN NO AMERICAN DIPLOMATS IN TRIPOLI SINCE THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY WAS CLOSED A YEAR AGO. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THE AMERICANS HAVE OTHER SOURCES OF OIL TO DRAW ON, AND TO DISRUPT OIL SUPPLIES MIGHT REBOUNT AGAINST LIBYA. A FAR WISER COURSE

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WOULD BE TO SEIZE ON THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES
HAS STOPPED SHORT OF BREAKING OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
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